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February 28, 1961

Dr. A. J. Riker
Department of Plant Pathology
University of Wisconsin
Madison 6, Wisconsin

Dear Joyce:

Having contributed so little to the section until now, I do not feel entitled to make a studied comment on the statement of "Some Opportunities and Challenges in the Plant Sciences." I feel, however, that the traditional separation of Botany from Zoology continues to have a deleterious effect on the development of basic experimental work in biology, and to suppress the adequate development of such unifying fields as biochemistry, biophysics, genetics, in short molecular biology and cell biology. Certainly there is strong reason for a plant vs. animal orientation in applied fields, but I believe this is doing great harm to research and teaching of fundamental biological science in our universities, and in the Academy's functions as well.

As a gesture in support of this principle, and I hope not as any measure of ingratitude or diffidence to my personal friends in the Section, I am asking by copy of this letter to be transferred to the Biochemistry section of the Academy. I hope that members of the Botany section will be able to devise more constructive means than I have to meet the responsibilities of contemporary science.

Yours sincerely,

Joshua Lederberg
Professor of Genetics

cc: Dr. Bronk